

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN
CYMRU**



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE PERFORMANCE, AUDIT
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING**

**COFNODION CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR
ADOLYGU AC ARCHWILIO PERFFORMIAD
MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DYDD LLUN, 27 GORFFENNAF 2015
MONDAY, 27 JULY 2015**

**YSTAFELL CAER, PENCADLYS Y GWASANAETH TÂN, CAERFYRDDIN
CAER SUITE, FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, CARMARTHEN**

11.00 – 12:30

87% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CHAIR Deputy Chair Councillor E G Thomas

IS-GADEIRYDD/DEPUTY CHAIR:

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: K Curry, J Curtice, J Dudley,
W Evans (joined meeting at 11:20hrs),
T Hennegan, P James, G Jones
R Rees-Evans, G Tanner, G Walker,
T Wilcox, J Williams

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:

K Pearson, J Warman (Chair)

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:

D Daycock, M Crennell, S Flather,
K Davies, C Jackson, R Quin,
R Thomas, S Barry (WAO)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Pearson and J Warman (Chair of the committee).

2 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

All Members present declared that they had a personal interest in any business relating to, or affecting their own Constituent Authority.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PERSONAL MATTERS

A warm welcome was extended to Mr Steve Barry of the Wales Audit Office who was in attendance to present items 6,7,8, and 9 of the agenda.

The Chair referred to a confidential briefing note providing a breakdown of fire deaths according to Service areas which had been circulated to Members as requested at the PASC meeting held on 11 May 2015. Members were informed that there would be an opportunity to discuss the briefing note after the conclusion of the meeting.

4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MAY 2015

The minutes of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 May 2015 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings, subject to the following amendment:

Page 1, item 1: Cllr P James to be included on the list of apologies.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 JUNE 2015

The minutes of the Special Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3 June 2015 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

Matters arising from the meeting held on 3 June 2015

Councillor P James congratulated Cllrs J Warman and E G Thomas on their appointment as Chair and Deputy Chair of Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee for 2015/16.

6 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE ‘FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSESSMENT’ REPORT 2014/15

The report was noted.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the report.

7 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE ‘DELIVERING WITH LESS – WORKFORCE RECONFIGURATION’ REPORT 2014/15

The report was noted.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the report.

8 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE DATA QUALITY REVIEW

The report was noted.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the report.

9 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2014/15

Mr S Barry of the Wales Audit Office presented the Annual Improvement Report 2014/15, which encapsulated a series of reviews undertaken by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) during the reporting period in question, and was produced in accordance with the requirements of the Auditor General for Wales under the Local Government (Wales) Measure. The report also covered the matters which were contained in the reports noted by the Committee at Items 6,7 and 8 above.

In relation to the Financial Planning Assessment review, Members were informed that the WAO had examined the financial positions of all the Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities during the period May to August 2014 and how they were managing their budgets in the context of the financial challenges facing local government with the objective of delivering required savings.

The Committee was pleased to note the WAO’s overall conclusion that the Authority had effective financial management arrangements in place with no immediate shortcomings. The report’s findings were reached as a result of the

Authority's good track record of effective budgetary control coupled with its adequate arrangements to deliver 2014-15 savings.

Consideration was given to the proposals for improvement outlined within the report which would help the Authority strengthen its financial planning arrangements in the future. These proposals centered upon the implementation of a medium term financial plan, income generation, the adoption of a reserves policy and the establishment of clearer links between improvement objectives and financial plans.

In response to a query from Councillor P James, Mr Barry clarified that a financial plan, which was aligned to the Strategic Plan and provided an indicative budget scenario to assist forward planning, should be formally adopted at Member level.

Mr S Barry further reported that a review of the implementation of innovative three-watch crewing systems at Port Talbot fire station in June 2014 and at Swansea West Fire Station in January 2015 was undertaken at the request of the Chief Fire Officer in line with the Auditor General's programme of all-Wales national studies for 2014.

Committee were also informed that the WAO had concluded that whilst efficiency savings had been achieved by reconfiguration of the workforce, and that there had been clear leadership and direction, limitations in available documentation had weakened the ability of the Authority to evaluate and use lessons for the future. A proposal for improvement had therefore been recommended in order that the Authority adopt and undertake a pre-implementation assessment of intended benefits; effective risk management both pre-implementation and during implementation; and a post-implementation evaluation of outcomes against planned benefits.

Councillor J Dudley raised concerns in relation to the limitations in the documentation and Mr Barry provided an overview of the general project management principles expected by the WAO which it was felt ensure that the Service incorporated a period of reflection as part of the implementation process. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer acknowledged the report as reflecting the true position of the organisation at that time, and attributed the rapid implementation process to the financial pressures placed upon the Service. Members were assured that the learning outcomes had been taken on board by the Service and arrangements were now in place to ensure that appropriate project management methodology would be followed in future.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement highlighted that whilst the project could have been improved in terms of structure and methodology, it was pleasing to note that the collaboration with Representative Bodies throughout the project had resulted in a significant improvement in working relationships with Trade Unions.

Reference was made to the Data Quality Review (fully detailed in item 8 on the Agenda) which reviewed a sample of the Authority's performance measures and

operational data systems in line with the performance audit programme for 2015/16. Committee were informed that following the review, the WAO had concluded that the Authority had well embedded systems that produced accurate management information that was used to support improvement planning, although some gaps existed in terms of equality information. Furthermore, it was determined that the national strategic and core indicators for 2013-14 were correctly stated, and that data was used well in order to inform improvement planning and to support performance reporting.

In respect of Welsh Language, the WAO acknowledged the Welsh Language Commissioner's view that developments had stalled during 2013/14 due to staff shortages, however noted the Service's commitment to developing its provision further next year.

Mr Barry referred to Exhibit 1 of the Annual Improvement report and clarified that whilst the Welsh Government figures suggested an increase in expenditure between 2011-12 and 2013-14, in real terms it actually represented an overall reduction when taking into account inflationary pressures. The report would therefore be updated to apply a 'real terms' analysis which would reflect a £3 reduction in expenditure per head of population since 2011-12.

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer reported that the Annual Improvement Report would be considered at the Fire Authority meeting in September 2015.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.

10 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORTS – QUARTER 1 2015/16

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced the Business Development Reports for Quarter 1 of 2015/16 which had been developed to capture the Service's performance in that period. Members were provided with an overview of the recent major structural changes in the management structure which would fundamentally change the way future reports were presented to the Committee. It was explained that the Executive Leadership Team had therefore factored in a 3 month hiatus for the first quarter of the 2015/16 reporting period, in order to embed the new structure.

The Committee gave consideration to the performance updates to June 2015 which were attached as appendices to the report, and the following observations were made:

Appendix 1 - Performance Report

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the number of incidents attended by the Service had risen slightly and was currently showing a projected increase of 2% for 2015/16, compared with the 2014/15 reporting period. It was explained that the

increase in the number of deliberate fires attended could be attributed in some part to the rise in grass fires experienced during April 2015. Members also acknowledged the increase in non-statutory activity, including co-responder and flooding incidents.

Members were informed that whilst the number of road traffic collisions was projected to show an increase of 12% compared with the previous year, the overall trend over a five year period remained flat.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Committee that whilst the number of fires attended had increased by 8% from the previous year, the long term trend remained downwards. It was noted that a total of 2 fire deaths had occurred during 2015/16 in dwelling fires and the number of fire injuries was projected to decrease by 17%.

Committee were informed that of the 38 statutory and core performance indicators which measured performance on corporate health and service delivery, the long term trends in performance was down or flat in 20 of the indicators. The 9 indicators that were showing an increase in trends related to elements of sickness, fire injuries, hoax calls attended and percentage of smoke alarms not activated.

In response to a query from Cllr A Wilcox, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that a Strategic Arson Reduction Board was being established focussing on the strategic issues raised by the recent Grass Fires Summit as well as the overarching arson picture across Wales. The Board would be chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and would have representatives from the Police, Fire and Welsh Government.

Following a query from Councillor P James, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer clarified that a call-challenge strategy was in place to drive down the number of mobilisations to hoax calls, and that the overall figures provided for 2015/16 was a projection only. In response to a query from Councillor A Wilcox the Deputy Chief Fire Officer agreed to further explore the issue regarding hoax calls and provide further information in relation to the average number of hoax calls attended by means of a report to the next Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report and the progress made to date.

11 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE JOINT PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE PROJECT (JPSCP)

The Corporate Head of Service Delivery presented the progress report on the Joint Public Service Centre Project (JPSCP).

Members were presented with an overview of the project set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and detailed consideration was given to the seven key task areas

relating to building works, staffing, command and control system, infrastructure, business continuity, operational assurance and implementation/transition. The following areas of interest were noted:

Members were pleased to note that the procurement of the command and control system had been successfully concluded.

In respect of the tender process for the building works, Members were informed that the award process would be completed shortly and a revised building schedule had been provided to take account of the expanded redevelopment scheme.

With regard to the implementation and transition processes, Committee were informed that the vetting process to enable fire control staff to work from police premises had been completed and would now enable the appointment process of Station Manager roles within the new structure to commence. It was reported that the focus for the coming months would be on harmonising HR policies, considering annual leave arrangements and engaging in continued negotiation on the establishment and shift patterns with the Representative Body.

Reference was made to the recent staff engagement event held on 21 July 2015 which provided an opportunity for staff and members of the Strategic Leadership Group to come together and share ideas, suggestions and concerns regarding the project. At the request of Councillor P James, the Corporate Head of Service Delivery agreed to forward Members a list of questions asked by stakeholders at the engagement event.

The Programme Coordinator, in response to a query raised by Councillor T Hennegan, clarified that external communications had remained quiet during the reporting period as a significant amount of the information was now available in the public domain, and accordingly therefore requests for information had declined.

In response to a query from Cllr T Hennegan, the Corporate Head of Service Delivery confirmed that a site visit for Authority Members had been scheduled as part of the Member Training and Development Programme for 2015/16.

The Corporate Head of Service Delivery, in response to a query raised by Councillor P James, confirmed that regular project meetings were held with Fire Service representation to ensure that effective governance arrangements were in place to monitor finances and timescales for the project.

In response to a query raised by Councillor P James the Project Coordinator clarified that significant testing of the new command and control system would be undertaken by experienced external consultants as a means of verifying the system. In addition, Members were informed that the existing command and control system would run in parallel with the new system for a period of six months to ensure that it was fit for purpose.

Cllr W Evans commended the sterling work of all staff involved with the project and

noted his disappointment that the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust had yet to reach a decision as to whether or not they would be joining the project.

Councillor J Dudley requested that the font size of the financial information, set out at Appendix 1 of the report, be increased in future update reports to ensure legibility.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the report.

12 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE BUSINESS RISK REGISTER UPDATE REPORT TO JUNE 2015

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement presented the Business Risk Register Update Report to July 2015 to the Committee.

The Director informed Members that the Risk Register was updated in a flexible manner according to the requirements of the Service and a total of 9 Business Risks were currently captured by the Risk Register. Each risk had been reviewed by the Business Risk Management Group and allocated a definitive 'Risk Ranking' value, as follows: 0 Very High Risk, 0 High Risk, 8 Medium Risk, and 1 Low Risk.

Committee were informed that of the 9 identified business risks during the last review of the register, 5 risk ratings had been reduced, 3 remained unchanged and 1 had been increased.

Members were then provided with an overview of Appendices A-C, which outlined the areas of risk, the methodology used, and the rationale and audit trail for the allocated risk ranking value.

Councillor R Rees-Evans commended the report which he felt comprehensively outlined the Authority's effective risk management arrangements.

In response to a query from Councillor P James the Director of Operational Support and Improvement provided an overview of the scoring methodology and ranking values within the Risk Assessment Matrix set out at Appendix 2 of the report.

Councillor T Hennegan was pleased to note that the risk rating relating to regulatory body relationships had decreased, which he felt demonstrated a cultural change within the organisation.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the content of the Report and acknowledge the ongoing progress to both identify and manage matters of business risk affecting the Service.

13 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer informed members of an amendment to the agenda item 13 which required Committee to approve the Code of Corporate Governance Assurance Statement. Furthermore, he reported that an amendment to the recommendation contained within the report also needed to be made, as follows:

'That Committee approve and recommend to the Fire Authority the Statement of Assurance for signature by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts'.

Committee were provided with an overview of the management of corporate governance within the Authority, which was undertaken in line with the CIPFA / SOLACE framework.

The Head of Finance informed Members that the annual review of Corporate Governance was considered to be good practice and was a means of enabling the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives, in line with the systems, processes culture and values of the organisation.

It was proposed that Committee, having reviewed the positive audits which had been reported, recommend to the Fire Authority that it approve the Statement of Assurance set out at Appendix 1 of the report, for signature by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee approve and recommend to the Fire Authority the Statement of Assurance for signature by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts.

14 TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER ITEM OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100(B)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12:15.